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November 20, 1998

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The Honorable Rodney Slater
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Slater,

I am writing to you as an owner of a travel agency.

The recent **decision** of major U.S. airlines to cap commissions at \$100 on international air fares is one more step as an all out assault to drive travel agents, a small business in most cases, out of business. By forcing agents out, consumers will have no choice but to deal with the airlines directly through 800 numbers and Internet. This will result in consumers paying more for air tickets. This fact was confirmed on a recent **20/20 TV** program which illustrated that when you remove the agencies from the scene the airlines can over charge passengers at will.

I am deeply concerned about what the airlines are doing to force the public to deal directly with them. The airlines do not want the public to have sources of unbiased information on air fares easily available at travel agents. We, the agents, provide the only method that consumers can obtain unbiased comparative fares and schedule information today.

The airlines' new commission policy fuels the fires of concern about the lack of airline competition in today's market with its fortress hub system and controls over the computer reservations system. I request that you please take the necessary steps to prevent these monopolistic practices of airlines from harming the travel consumer.

Sincerely,

Keith Tucker
Co-owner

